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5 DEC 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT : Preliminary Conclusions Reached in
the Loss of Agency U-2 off Florida

1. This memorandum is for your information only.
2. During the period 23-25 November 1963, an officer from the staff of the Office of Special Activities, DD/S&T, participated with the SAC Accident Investigation Board at the Naval Station, Key West, Florida, which had met to review the wreckage of Agency U-2, Serial Number 350. This Article had been on loan to SAC in support of their Cuba overflight missions.
3. From a careful analysis of the recovered fuselage and parts, the following observations have been made:
 - a. The aircraft was completely intact at point of impact with the water.
 - b. Pilot must have ejected just prior to impact or immediately after the aircraft struck the water.
 - c. The engine was not running at time of impact.
 - d. Apparently the aircraft had experienced some pressurization problems during the mission. (Information noted from recovered Flight Plan Card)
4. A number of aircraft components, including the instrument panel, which were thought to have some bearing on the cause of the accident are being returned to Lockheed for further analysis. The J-75 engine will be returned to Pratt and Whitney at East Hartford for their inspection. Instructions have been left with the SAC Investigation Group to dispose of the remaining fuselage and bits and pieces no longer required in the investigation.

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5. From the analysis made of the wreckage, a preliminary opinion is that the pilot made an emergency descent, from the last reported altitude of 69,000 feet, from which he did not recover. Many multiple failures in the Article, the systems, or the pilot's equipment could have occurred to cause this drastic action by the pilot. To the best of our knowledge, the only single failure that we can see is the possible loss of oxygen to the pilot caused by a faulty flow regulator in the pilot's seat pack. The seat, seat pack, and parachute, along with the pilot, were not recovered, although an intensive search of the area was made.

6. The SAC group will reconvene to pursue their investigation of the accident after the results of the contractors' analyses of the salvaged parts and engine are completed.


ALBERT D. WHEELON
Deputy Director
(Science and Technology)

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Signature recommended:

3 DEC 1963

(Signed) Jack C. Ledford
AD/OSA

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MD/OSA:  ab (2 Dec 63)

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